1-1-1968

Shelley's theory of evil.

David Lindsay
University of Windsor

SHELLEY'S THEORY OF EVIL

BY

DAVID LINDSAY

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies through
the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario

1968

ABF 1187

APPROVED:

Douglas M. Schwegel

Raymond J. Smith

John K. H. Dunn

122369

ABSTRACT

Shelley seems to base his system of morals most closely on that of the British empiricists, and, especially, Hume. He derives his concept of the imagination from Hume and its role plays a major importance in Shelley. Shelley regards the imagination as superior to the reason, for it is the basis of all knowledge. As it is the correlating power between man and the universe, its creations, which Shelley calls, in whatever form, poetry, are a reflection of the influence of nature or society on man's mind. The reason only distinguishes between ideas created by the imagination in order to determine those which can be made useful.

Evil for Shelley is largely subjective in nature and results from man's failure to cultivate his imagination in order to regulate his relations with his fellow men, the realm of morals. The man who has familiarized himself with the good which exists in thought, action and persons not his own has a vast associative response in his unconscious. The imagination, which commands the unconscious, instinctively adjusts his thoughts to present events. The reason, which is a conscious power has a limited view and less efficiently fits means to ends.

The Defence states that "without an intermixture of the poetical element . . . [evil] . . . must ever flow from the unmitigated exercise of the reason" (VII, p. 356). Systems, whether civil, religious, scientific, or economic in nature, imposed upon man by reasoners without scrutiny of the effects, may destroy man's sensibility. Only the imagination, cultivated by an habitual perception of the consequences of actions, can accommodate calculations of the reason to man's inner

nature. Evil may be said to result from an imagination gap in man's moral reasoning.

Man cultivates his imagination by empathy, putting himself in the place of others. The thoughts and feelings of his fellow men must become his own. Love acts to cultivate the imagination, for it is a "going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own" (Defence, VII, p. 118). It is only when man's sympathies have been enlarged to an affinity with those of all mankind, both in the present and the past, that he rises above the temporal order, the realm of reason. Then the creations of his imagination partake of the eternal and the universal.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter	
I. THE IMAGINATION AND THE ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS	9
II. THE REASON AND THE DISSOCIATION OF IDEAS	15
III. MAN'S SOCIAL INSTINCTS	24
IV. MAN'S DISSOCIATED SENSIBILTY AND EVIL	31
V. THE PERPETUATION OF EVIL	37
VI. LOVE AND THE FALL FROM EVIL	53
CONCLUSION	66
BIBLIOGRAPHY	68
VITA AUCTORIS	70

INTRODUCTION

An inquiry into Shelley's theory of evil requires some investigation of his system of philosophy. For this purpose, I intend to deal mainly with his prose for its more explicit statement of his ideas. The essay most relevant to my problem is A Defence of Poetry. Written in the spring of 1821, it is Shelley's last major prose work and contains the maturest expression in prose of his philosophy. Of the earlier works I wish to deal primarily with "Speculations on Morals," "Speculations on Metaphysics" and "On the Punishment of Death," as they are concerned more specifically with my problem. I am confining discussion of Shelley's poetry to Prometheus Unbound and "Ode to Liberty," and I refer to them mainly to exemplify some of my thesis statements.

Most of the critical writings on Shelley indicate inconsistency in his thought due to the fact that he is generally considered wholly Platonic. Viewing Shelley's earlier works from the vantage point of the Defence, however, reveals that his system makes up a coherent whole, for the ideas in the Defence are found in nascent form in the earlier prose. The evidence of these writings also shows that Shelley owes much to empiricism, the main current of thought in his day. These, perhaps, are the most significant discoveries of my work and, taken in view of typical Shelley criticism, quite radical. But recent critics of Shelley also find consistency and a debt to empiricism and advocate the reading of Shelley's prose as a key to his thought.[1]

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1 Some of these critics and their works are: David Lee Clark,

Evil and its cause are a prominent concern in Shelley's work. Considering the times in which he wrote, we can appreciate why, for most of his work falls between 1813 and 1822, a period of war, oppression, and severe economic conditions in Europe and England. Many events, whether they were a sign of hope or an act of tyranny, would spur Shelley to write, the Peterloo Massacre and the 1820 revolution in Spain inspiring respectively, "The Masque of Anarchy" and "Ode to Liberty." As a result, many of his works either cry out against tyranny or herald some occurrence which signals the revival of freedom.

In times of unrest it is natural to look for some cause in the hope that its eradication will bring about a change. This is the role that Shelley assigns to the poet:

> Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present; the words which express what they understand not; the trumpets which sing to battle, and feel not what they inspire; the influence which is moved not, but moves.[2]

It is with this attitude that Shelley turns towards the problems of the world.

Shelley believes that evil takes two forms, one subjective in nature, and the other objective. Objective evil, including earthquakes, disease, mutability and death, is part of the natural order of existence. Man eventually may alleviate the effects of many of these evils, although in Prometheus Unbound, even after Jupiter's fall and the return of love

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Shelley's Prose: The Trumpet of a Prophecy, 1954; Earl Wasserman, Prometheus Unbound, 1965; C.E. Pulos, The Deep Truth: A Study of Shelley's Skepticism, 1954; Donald H. Reiman, Shelley's "The Triumph of Life": A Critical Study, 1965.

2 Percy Bysshe Shelley, A Defence of Poetry, The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck, 10 vols. (New York, 1965), VII, p. 140. All quotations from Shelley's works, unless otherwise noted, are from this edition.

have effected man's regeneration, he is still subject to "chance, and death, and mutability" (III, iv, l. 201).

Subjective evil is largely of man's own making. Queen Mab tells us that "Man . . . fabricates/ The sword which stabs his peace" (III, ll. 199-200).[3] Because of its nature, subjective evil would seem easily removed, prompting Shelley, who wonders why man acquiesces in his condition to cry out frequently against the tyranny of kings, priests and government, as in this passage from The Revolt of Islam:

> 'This need not be; ye might arise, and will
> That gold should lose its power, and thrones their glory;
> That love, which none may bind, be free to fill
> The world, like light; and evil faith, grown hoary
> With crime, be quenched and die . . .
> Dungeons and palaces are transitory--
> High temples fade like vapour--man alone
> Remains, whose will has power when all beside is gone.'[4]
> (VIII, xvi, ll. 3334-42)

Since Shelley feels that subjective evil can be removed by man, his primary concern with this aspect of the problem of evil forms the focus of my paper.

A concern with subjective evil necessitates an understanding of man. Shelley considers that philosophers who are subjective, use inductive reasoning, refer to experience and are opposed to external forms provide the proper emphasis for this type of inquiry. A Philosophical View of Reform cites Bacon, Spinoza, Hobbes, Bayle, and Montaigne as originators of this new form of inquiry (VII, p. 8).[5] Locke and the "philosophers

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3 Compare "Julian and Maddalo," ll. 170-171; "Ode to Liberty," ll. 243-245; and A Philosophical View of Reform: "Mankind seem to acquiesce, as in a necessary condition of the imbecility of their own will and reason, in the existence of an aristocracy" (VII, p. 228).

4 Compare Prometheus Unbound: " . . . The Man remains . . . the King/ Over himself" (III, iv, ll. 193-197).

5 "Descartes cancelled for Bayle MS" (VII, p. 334).

of his exact and intelligible but superficial school" come next and, finally, Berkeley and Hume (VII, pp. 8-9).[6] Unlike his contemporaries, Leibniz and Descartes, Spinoza, a Jew, was under no compulsion to adapt his ideas to Christian theology. "Speculations on Metaphysics," rejecting Aristotle for giving "Logic the name of Metaphysics," also censures modern philosophers for not strictly adhering to Bacon's inductive method (VII, p. 63).[7]

A Philosophical View of Reform, honouring the above-mentioned philosophers, heralds a "new epoch" of philosophical inquiry which, making a "deeper enquiry into the forms of human nature," finds ideas which are "incompatible with an unreserved belief in any of those popular mistakes upon which popular systems of faith with respect to the cause and agencies of the universe, with all their superstructure of political and religious tyranny, are built" (VII, p. 8). The practitioners of this new philosophy

> indicated inferences the most incompatible with the popular religions and the established governments of Europe. Philosophy went forth into the inchanted forest of the demons of worldly power, as the pioneer of the over-growth of ages. (VII, pp. 8-9)

The forests are the established beliefs of religion and government. This new philosophy, by investigating the forms of human nature, reveals an incompatibility between man and existing systems of law. Man has created these external forms through the use of reason. What these philosophers found is that a re-establishment of external laws based on the inner laws of human nature is needed.

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6 "Hartley" was cancelled for "Berkeley" in the manuscript (VII, p. 334).

7 Locke is included along with Aristotle, no doubt for becoming too deeply concerned with words.

Man has too long been defined in terms of the analytic fallacy. Aristotle defines things in terms of their specific differences. The specific difference in man is his reason. But too much emphasis has been placed on his reason instead of a consideration of his integrity. Man has been forced to play an angel while he is actually partly animal.

The modern philosophers attempted to investigate this fallacy. Shelley, investigating the inner forms of human nature, finds that the imagination is the superior faculty and more exactly defines man's character. He states in "Speculations on Metaphysics" that

> Most of the errors of philosophers have arisen from considering the human being in a point of view too detailed and circumscribed. He is not a moral, and an intellectual, --but also, and pre-eminently, an imaginative being. (VII, 65)

Man should be defined as an imaginative animal, which is his synthetic difference from all other beings, not by his analytic split-up and therefore false difference.

The chief problem of man in a world of change is his difficulty in determining right and wrong; he lacks a stable basis from which to judge. Shelley inherits the tradition of the eighteenth century empiricists who do not allow for the existence of anything which cannot be experienced. Since we never perceive the reality underlying appearances, the reason is not infallible. Hume, who applies this sceptical philosophy most rigorously, finds, however, that the imagination gives man a degree of stability; and Shelley seems to adopt his postion.

Hume describes two activities of the imagination. Through fancy it combines ideas in an infinite variety of ways. Hume calls these ideas "fictions".[8] The imagination also combines ideas according to certain mental determinations when the mind is excited by external objects. These

ideas Hume calls "belief" (Enquiries, p. 47). Ideas of belief are distinguished from fictions by a feeling implanted by the effect of custom on our minds. This latter activity of the imagination gives man a degree of security in his judgments.

Custom is defined in An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding:

> Wherever the repetition of any particular act or operation produces a propensity to renew the same act or operation, without being impelled by any reasoning or process of the understanding, we always say, that this propensity is the effect of custom. (Enquiries, p. 43)

This propensity is due to the imagination. The imagination is the correlating power between man and the universe. Whenever an object is presented to the memory or senses, the imagination revives its correlative idea, the idea previously imprinted on the mind by nature. The constant conjunction of events observable in nature leads to the association of ideas in the mind. If the imagination is free to respond to impressions, there will be a harmony between the thoughts in man's mind and the course of nature and, although man is ignorant of the cause of events, he finds security.

All of the ideas in man's mind have an essential unity, as they have been associated by the "constant conjunction of events" observable in nature.[9] Reason then considers the relations between ideas in order to determine those which can be made subservient to our animal nature. As reason is the analytical faculty, it abstracts parts from the ideas created by the imagination. The abstractions are then taken as defining

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8 David Hume, Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (London, 1902), p. 47. All quotations from Hume's works, unless otherwise noted, are from this edition.

9 Both Shelley and Hume use the phrase, "a constant conjunction of events."

the whole and, thus, the original unity is lost;

> The one [imagination] is the . . . principle of synthesis, and has for its objects those forms which are common to universal nature and existence itself; and the other is the . . . principle of analysis, and its action regards the relations of things, simply as relations; considering thoughts, not in their integral unity, but as the algebraical representations which conduct to certain general results.
> (A Defence of Poetry, VII, p. 109)

Man defines things in terms of abstractions and such definitions become his terms of reference in forming his judgments. The qualitative value of thoughts is forgotten and man loses his intense apprehension of life. He enslaves himself by submitting to an external order which seems immutable, an observation which Shelley makes of the French in A Philosophical View of Reform:

> The French were what their literature is (excluding Montaigne and Rousseau, and some leaders of the . . .) weak, superficial, vain, with little imagination, and with passions as well as judgments cleaving to the external form of things.
> (VII, pp. 13-14)

A separation between reason and imagination causes evil, for thoughts are no longer being considered in their "integral unity". An "intermixture" of reason and imagination brings the qualitative value back into thoughts. This is represented in Prometheus Unbound when Asia and Prometheus are reunited. Prometheus, whose name means foresight, represents the imagination; Asia is love. The two characters are able to perceive the essential unity of all thoughts when they are united:

> . . . We will search, with looks and words of love,
> For hidden thoughts, . . . and . . .
> Weave harmonies divine, yet ever new,
> From difference sweet where discord cannot be.
> (III, iii, 11. 34-39)

Through love, man is able to respond imaginatively. The harmony underlying existence can then be seen. As Asia in Prometheus Unbound

also says, "love . . . makes the reptile equal to the God" (II, v, ll. 39-43). Epipsychidion, written two years later, repeats the same idea:

> I know
> That Love makes all things equal: I have heard
> By mine own heart this joyous truth averred:
> The spirit of the worm beneath the sod
> In love and worship, blends itself with God.
> (ll. 125-129)

The reason, as D.H. Lawrence illustrates in "Snake," distinguishes between things and thus man commits evil:

> The voice of my education said to me
> He must be killed,
> For in Sicily the black, black snakes are innocent, the gold
> are venomous.

A Defence of Poetry warns that a separation between reason and imagination causes evil. "Reasoners" must

> beware that their speculations, for want of correspondence with those first principles which belong to the imagination, do not tend . . . to exasperate at once the extremes of luxury and want. . . . The rich have become richer, and the poor have become poorer . . .. Such are the effects which must ever flow from an unmitigated exercise of the calculating faculty. (VII, p. 132)

In an earlier draft of this same passage Shelley writes, "But without an intermixture of the poetical element, such are the effects which must ever flow from the unmitigated exercise of the reason" (VII, p. 356). Evil may be said to result from an imagination gap in man's moral judgments. In my thesis I wish to develop fully Shelley's interpretation of the imagination and the reason and the roles he assigns to each.

CHAPTER I

THE IMAGINATION AND THE ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS

A discussion of reason and imagination and the roles proper to each makes up much of the content of A Defence of Poetry. In that work Shelley calls the imagination the creative faculty and reason the analytic, designating the former as the superior power. The function of the imagination seems to be to create the forms, habits and ideas of man's thought.

Shelley's interpretation of the imaginaton is significant, for it aligns him with one of two contending schools regarding the origin of ideas. It has long been the problem of philosophy to determine the source of ideas which form the basis of thought. Two schools of thought which have arisen are innatism, or rationalism, and empiricism.

Empiricism opposes innatism. The innatists profess that ideas, such as the archetypes of Plato, already exist in our minds and sensation is only necessary to realize them. The empiricists hold that there are no innate ideas; everything comes from experience. Man, however, feels that there is a connection between cause and effect. The problem of the empiricists, then, is to account for the association of ideas--how does man arrive at concepts in a world of change? Berkeley uses theism; God orders the ideas in our mind. But, lacking proof of the existence of God, a rigorous sceptic finds this an unacceptable explanation. In place of God, Hume argues that the customary transition of the imagina-

tion from one object to its usual attendant implants this feeling in man's mind (Enquiries, p. 75).

Man does not know the true nature of existence. As Shelley says in the Defence when he states a basic tenet of Hume's philosophy, "We know no more of cause and effect than a constant conjunction of events" (VII, p. 119). We cannot see beyond the appearances of things. For example, never perceiving the actual link between cause and effect, man cannot see how the impulse of one billiard ball is attended with motion in the second: "This is the whole that appears to the outward senses. The mind feels no sentiment or inward impression from this succession of objects . . ." (Enquiries, p. 63).

Because objects only present an appearance to our senses, Hume calls our sense-data "impressions," a term which Shelley also uses. In the Defence Shelley calls impressions which have been elaborated into perceptions and then into conceptions "images," thus retaining the sense that man only knows the appearances of things:

> The savage . . . expresses the emotions produced in him by surrounding objects in a similar manner; and language and gesture, together with plastic and pictorial imitation, become the image of the combined effect of those objects, and of his apprehension of them. (VII, p. 110)

In the first moments of perception man is aware only of sensations. Primary sensations are not organized in the mind. It is not until later that they are elaborated into perceptions and, subsequently, into conceptions. The child, which Shelley uses in numerous essays as an example of man in his origins, makes no distinction between itself and the external world around it. A child at first has an intense awareness of life. There is no distinction between consciousness and the unconscious at this stage. All of the impressions of its earliest forms

of experience are stored in the mind as latent ideas.

The imagination is the mental power which revives ideas from the unconscious storehouse. Sensible impressions which appear similar are seen to recur and are associated in the mind. This association takes place when an object, presented again to our memory or senses, causes the imagination to revive its correlative idea. This concurrence of views reinforces the idea more strongly on the imagination. Eventually, a feeling of expectation develops which distinguishes between ideas revived by the senses and fictions of the imagination. This entire activity is uncontrolled by man; in fact, a passive mind makes a more fertile soil for the implanting of associations.

Hume uses the example of a billiard ball rolling toward another on a smooth table to illustrate how a feeling of expectation develops in man. He states that in man's first observation of a billiard ball rolling toward another, he is unable to predict the effect. It is only after impulse is imparted to the second ball that he knows a causal relation. The frequent recurrence of this conjunction of events leads the mind to expect a similar effect from similar causes. If a man sees a billiard ball rolling toward another, the conception that it will stop upon contact implies no inherent contradiction. But this conception feels very differently from the conception of motion being imparted to the second ball.[10]

This conditioning gives man foresight. When a billiard ball is seen rolling towards another his thought goes forward in imagination to anti-

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10 The idea of motion being imparted to the second ball is a matter of probability not of fact; the ball could equally well bounce off the second ball, fly into the air, etc. Knowledge only extends to that which has the highest probability.

cipate experience and in doing so it finds nature confirming its venture. Nature implants an instinct in man and, although he is ignorant of the powers and forces which govern nature, he finds that his thoughts and conceptions have still gone on in the same train with the other works of nature (Enquiries, pp. 54-55). "Here, then, is a kind of pre-established harmony between the course of nature and the succession of our ideas . . . " (Enquiries, p. 54).

In the Defence Shelley, explaining how poetry, which he calls the "expression of the imagination," is created, gives an interpretation of the imagination similar to Hume's:

> Man is an instrument over which a series of external and internal impressions are driven, like the alternations of an ever-changing wind over an AEolian lyre, which move it by their motion to ever-changing melody. But there is a principle within the human being, and perhaps within all sentient beings, which acts otherwise than in the lyre, and produces not melody alone, but harmony, by an internal adjustment of the sounds or motions thus excited to the impressions which excite them. (VII, p. 109)

The lyre metaphor appeals to the Romantic poets because the melody is not played by man, but by nature. Nature is the musician and man the instrument. The first sentence of the quotation implies that man plays a passive role when he receives impressions, a suggestion which is borne out in other works of Shelley. For example, "Mont Blanc" refers to the imprinting of impressions as,

> My own, my human mind, which passively
> Now renders and receives fast influencings,
> Holding an unremitting interchange
> With the clear universe of things around . . ..
> (11. 37-40)

The mind also "passively . . . renders . . . influencings . . . ". This means that when an object is present to the memory or senses the imagination acts independently of man's conscious will.

Man seems subject to playing an ever-changing melody, reflecting the constant change around him, but the remainder of the lyre metaphor makes clear that he is capable of a response. A "principle" within him, the imagination, creates harmony by exciting "sounds or motions" which are similar to the impression. My interpretation of this, following Hume, is that the imagination revives ideas which are similar to the impressions. These ideas are accompanied by emotions, the feelings of expectation implanted in man by his observation of the "constant conjunction of events" in nature.

The "principle" within man produces harmony by "an internal adjustment." In his first draft of this passage Shelley had said that this was an "instinctive adjustment" (VII, p. 352). Instinct is a term which Hume also uses to explain this operation of the imagination: "[Nature] has . . . implanted in us an instinct, which carries forward the thought in a correspondent course to that which she has established among external objects . . . " (Enquiries, p. 56). Similarly, in "On the Punishment of Death," Shelley says that a "feeling" is "implanted" by the "habitual perception" of an action (VI, p. 189).

Although the imagination seems free to combine, take apart, and produce ideas in any order at all, it is actually determined by our very human nature to operate in certain regular ways. As Shelley says further in the Defence, "It is as if the lyre could accomodate its chords to the motions of that which strikes them, in a determined proportion of sound" (VII, p. 109). Mental customs are dispositions engendered by the working together of human nature with the nature which is beyond us but of which we are still an integral part.

It is to be noticed that both Shelley and Hume have defined the

imagination in the foregoing examples as being the correlating factor which revives latent ideas from the unconscious storehouse and relates them to present impressions. Both men are concerned with man's inability to know the true nature of existence, because of his inability to see beyond the appearances of things. But man does acquire definite habits of causal inference due to the operation of the imagination.

The imagination has command over all the ideas in the mind. This range of the imagination makes it the most efficient power for reviving ideas which are correlative to the impressions. This is a kind of sensory judgment as the ideas are revived by nature. Since these ideas are in harmony with nature, Hume calls them "ideas of judgment" (Enquiries, p. 49).

CHAPTER II

THE REASON AND THE DISSOCIATION OF IDEAS

Imagination, the creative faculty, creates the ideas which form the basis of thought by the process of association. Therefore all the ideas in the mind have an essential unity. Reason, the analytic faculty, can only consider relations between ideas already created by the imagination. It thus has a secondary role. The Defence states that reasoners "follow the footsteps of poets, and copy the sketches of their creations into the book of common life" (VII, p. 132); and that "Reason is the enumeration of quantities already known" (VII, p. 109).

Reason is considered as "mind contemplating the relations borne by one thought to another" (Defence, VII, p. 109) for the purpose of determining "what thoughts are most invariably subservient to the security and happiness of life" ("Speculations on Metaphysics," VII, p. 60). When reason analyzes the ideas created by the imagination, it divides them into parts, substituting traits for the whole. The traits, in turn, are taken to define ideas as a whole and their "integral unity" is forgotten. A gradual separation between internal and external takes place and man eventually submits to the "external" form of things.

Man can not discover the effect a priori from its cause, because he never perceives the reality behind appearances (Enquiries, p. 30). He is totally dependent upon experience for knowledge. Because of the uniformity of events in nature, his mind acquires determined habits of mental action. We believe that we know the actual connection between cause

and effect. Thus, although necessity occurs only as a mental determination upon experiencing certain impressions, we have a tendency to locate this mental event in the observed events, and to think of it as occurring there with the events, even though it is actually taking place in our minds.

This inherent fallacy in all reasoning of taking premises for fact leads to errors in speculation. Man reasons from these facts, believing that he knows the true nature of existence. This belief creates the distinction between internal and external. The idea of a necessary connection between events is only internal. Considering necessity as external is the inherent source of man's errors in speculation. "Speculations on Metaphysics" alludes to this problem:

> Aristotle and his followers, Locke and most of the modern Philosophers gave Logic the name of Metaphysics. Nor have those who are accustomed to profess the greatest veneration for the inductive system of Lord Bacon adhered with sufficient scrupulousness to its regulations. They have professed indeed (and who have not professed?) to deduce their conclusions from indisputable facts. How came many of those facts to be called indisputable? What sanctioning correspondence unites a concatenation of syllogisms? Their promises of deducing all systems from facts has too often been performed by appealing in favour of these pretended realities to the obstinate preconceptions of the multitude; or by the most preposterous mistake of a name for a thing. (VII, p. 63)[11]

Shelley, in Queen Mab, one of his early poems, commits the error of locating necessity in external nature, an error which Frank B. Evans points out.[12] Both Shelley and his mentor, Godwin, assert that the

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11 Locke is included because of his too great concern with words.

12 Frank B. Evans, "Shelley, Godwin, Hume, and the Doctrine of Necessity," Studies in Philology, XXXVII (1940), 632-40. Godwin in his book, An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, closely follows Hume, and Shelley, Godwin. Evans picks out parallel passages to show the similarities between the three. Godwin in many places even uses the

necessity of causation inheres in the structure of reality. They become dogmatic about the doctrine, giving it the status of a science. In his discussion of necessity in An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, Godwin declares that the causes of a human's actions can be known:

> He who affirms that all actions are necessary, means that, if we form a just and complete view of all the circumstances in which a living or intelligent being is placed, we shall find that he could not in any moment of his existence have acted otherwise than he has acted. According to this assertion there is in the transactions of mind nothing loose, precarious and uncertain.[13]

Shelley, following Godwin, says in Queen Mab:

> Were the doctrine of Necessity false, the human mind would no longer be a legitimate object of science. . . . The precise character and motives of any man on any occasion being given, the moral philosopher could predict his actions with as much certainty as the natural philosopher could predict the effects of the mixture of any particular chemical substances.
> (I, p. 144)

Shelley places faith in the infallibility of the senses and reason:

> The senses are the sources of all knowledge to the mind; consequently their evidence claims the strongest assent.
> The decision of the mind, founded upon our own experience, derived from these sources, claims the next degree.
> (Queen Mab, I, p. 146)

One scene in Queen Mab symbolically places passion below reason:

> Reason was free; and wild though Passion went
> Through tangled glens and wood-embosomed meads,
> Gathering a garland of the strangest flowers,
> Yet like the bee returning to her queen,
> She bound the sweetest on her sister's brow
> Who meek and sober kissed the sportive child,
> No longer trembling at the broken rod.
> (IX, 11. 50-56)

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same examples as Hume. Evans also shows that Godwin led Shelley to Hume, for certain passages in the notes to Queen Mab are not in Godwin, but are found in Hume.

13 William Godwin, An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, in Prose of the Romantic Period, ed. Carl R. Woodring (Boston, 1961), p. 19.

Since Shelley's assertion of the doctrine of Necessity as a rigorous science enables him to unveil the cause of evil, he is also able to suggest the cure:

> How can we take the benefits and reject the evils of the system, which is now interwoven with all the fibres of our being?--I believe that abstinence from animal food and spiritous liquors would in a great measure capacitate us for the solution of this important question.
> (Queen Mab, I, p. 159)

Shelley later drops his advocacy of vegetarianism in his poetry, no doubt because of his awareness that the cause of evil lay deeper.

Shelley advocated vegetarianism because he felt that man had deviated from nature by eating flesh. He also included air pollution, crowded cities, and the "muffling of our bodies in superfluous apparel" (Queen Mab, I, p. 159) as causes of evil. Once he realized that the course of nature was less easily known, he discarded this line of reasoning. He was really only blaming the effects of evil rather than the cause.

His faith in reason enables Shelley to state exactly in Queen Mab what the cause of evil is, but, later, the problem of assigning specific causes to specific effects becomes more difficult. Hume's attitude toward the doctrine of necessity is sceptical, in keeping with his philosophy. He denies any certainty of knowledge due to reason and the senses. Shelley gradually tends toward Hume's position that it is impossible to know rationally the actual principle of connection between cause and effect.

Another significant distinction which Shelley makes between reason and imagination is that the former is a conscious power and the latter, unconscious. We find in the Defence that poetry, the "expression of the imagination," is "not like reasoning, a power to be exerted according to

the determination of the will" (VII, p. 135); and, a few pages later, "Poetry . . . in this respect differs from logic, that it is not subject to the control of the . . . consciousness or will" (VII, p. 138). As "the mind in creation is as a fading coal" (Defence, VII, p. 135), its conceptions fade more and more as we consciously try to recapture them. Thus, because the reason is not able to recollect all the events associated with an object or action, its judgments are prone to be erroneous.

Originally, in the early stages of man's mental development, there is no distinction between the two levels of consciousness, a condition described in "On Life":

> Let us recollect our sensations as children. What a distinct and intense apprehension had we of the world and of ourselves! Many of the circumstances of social life were then important to us which are now no longer so. . . . We less habitually distinguished all that we saw and felt, from ourselves. They seemed as it were to constitute one mass. There are some persons who, in this respect, are always children. Those who are subject to the state called reverie, feel as if their nature were dissolved into the surrounding universe, or as if the surrounding universe were absorbed into their being. They are conscious of no distinction. And these are states which precede, or accompany, or follow an unusually intense and vivid apprehension of life. As men grow up this power commonly decays and they become mechanical and habitual agents. Thus feelings and then reasonings are the combined result of a multitude of entangled thoughts, and of a series of what are called impressions, planted by reiteration. (VI, pp. 195-196)

Man, habituated to existence, "fills out" his previously empty consciousness of an object. This "represents a logically distinct kind of consciousness, not some flow of feeling."[14] Man then makes a distinction between external and internal which leads him to assume that objects are entities in themselves. Believing that he knows the actual thing itself, man ends up consciously adjusting himself to an "external" exis-

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14 Jean-Paul Sartre, The Transcendence of the Ego (New York, 1957), p. 112.

tence instead of reversing this process. The ability to manipulate existence is lost and instead of being the shaper, man becomes shaped. Man, cursing the evils of existence, is only cursing his own creations.

Having lost his intense awareness of life, man forgets that things exist as they are perceived. "The mind is its own place, and in its self/ Can make a Heav'n of Hell a Hell of Heav'n."[15] In many places in his work Shelley refers to man's belief that the necessity of causation inheres in the structure of the universe and that things exist in themselves as a "veil" which obscures from him the true nature of existence.

When man reasons, his consciousness exercises a tyranny over his unconscious and he is less capable of an imaginative response:

> . . . Thought can with difficulty visit the intricate and winding chambers which it inhabits. It is like a river whose rapid and perpetual stream flows outwards . . .. The caverns of the mind are obscure, and shadowy; or pervaded with a lustre, beautifully bright indeed, but shining not beyond their portals. If it were possible to be where we have been, vitally and indeed--if, at the moment of our presence there, we could define the results of our experience,--if the passage from sensation to reflection--from a state of passive perception to voluntary contemplation, were not so dizzying and so tumultuous, this attempt would be less difficult.
>
> ("Speculations on Metaphysics," VII, p. 64)

The revival of latent ideas by the imagination is involuntary. The reason, which is voluntary and conscious, does not have this command over the storehouse of ideas. Reason would thus miss the peculiar nature of an action in tending to fit impressions to preconceptions.

Using reason, man assumes that the future will conform to the past,

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15 Shelley uses this quotation in the Defence (VII, p. 137). Compare: Christopher Marlowe, Doctor Faustus:

> Faust. How comes it, then, that thou art out of hell?
> Meph. Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it . . ..
>
> (III, 11. 87-88)

narrowing his range of thought. The reasoner, like Procrustes, usually makes actions fit his preconceptions, whether they do or not. Habit, leading man to believe that cause inheres in nature, causes him to take a fatalistic attitude toward life. By accepting events as inevitable, he loses his spontaneity as his imaginative response becomes duller and duller. Without the imaginative response there is no accompanying feeling and, thus, less able to determine the value of his thoughts, man is prone to commit error.

Several of Shelley's works state that man escapes the tyranny of the consciousness if he has a passive state of mind. This mental condition is best engendered by not distinguishing between the present and the past and, as "On the Punishment of Death" states, it is found in all those not yet dulled by society:

> The savage and the illiterate are but faintly aware of the distinction between the future and the past; they make actions belonging to periods so distinct, the subjects of similar feelings . . .. (VI, p. 189)

In the infancy of society, according to the Defence, every author is "necessarily a poet" (VII, p. 111), because the imaginative response is unbound. The consciousness does not exert a control and the mind is in its freest state to respond to impressions.

Since man cannot trust his own reasoning, he needs to live always in the present. Then the mind is more able to render the correct response to the present impressions. Since nature is in continual change, the organization of the subconscious storehouse never ends. This organization can take place more easily with a passive frame of mind. This is the passive interchange which the passage in "Mont Blanc," mentioned earlier, describes. By relying on reason, the mind is too fatalistically

orientated and the imaginative response is smothered.

Due to the effect of custom, the imaginative response is attended with a feeling which helps man to determine the value of his ideas. The experience of a strong feeling assures him that nature will confirm the venture of his thought when it goes forward in imagination to anticipate experience. This foresight gives man a degree of security in a world in which he is subjected continually to the "accident of surrounding impressions" (Defence, VII, p. 137). Man's unconscious response to "impressions" is more in harmony with "nature" or "society" than his conscious response is ever capable of.

Considering the roles assigned to imagination and reason in the Defence, we see that it negates Peacock's thesis in The Four Ages of Poetry. Peacock argues that the advance of knowledge and reason proportionately circumscribes the subject matter of poetry, for superstition, which excites the passions of man, is dispelled, and what was formerly expressed by poetry is now better said by prose. Shelley defeats Peacock's attack by showing that it is possible to doubt the certainty of knowledge, and if knowledge is uncertain, then reason is not infallible.

The reason is necessary to determine which thoughts can be made subservient to the needs of man, but the mystery remains despite man's quantitative measurements. Since the true nature of existence is not known, the imagination, with its access to the record imprinted by nature on the minds of men, gives man a modicum of security in a world of change. Poets, expressing the influence of society or nature upon their mind, may only create a "reflected image" of the "agencies of the invisible world," but there is a certain order in their creations which is "indestructible" (Defence, VII, p. 109). Man may only be capable of

creating "superstitions," but because of the order reflected in his expressions, "all original religions are allegorical or susceptible of allegory, and, like Janus, have a double face of false and true" (Defence, VII, p. 112).

CHAPTER III

MAN'S SOCIAL INSTINCTS

"Speculations on Metaphysics" and "Speculations on Morals" describe the development of man's awareness of his fellow man. The ideas contained in these two works are similar to those in the Defence. The significance of this aspect of Shelley's philosophy is that relations between men implant a number of instincts much in the same way that nature does. These instincts, peculiar to man's social nature, are called "social sympathies" (Defence, VII, p. 110).

The Defence explains that the social sympathies "begin to develop themselves from the moment that two human beings coexist . . . " (VII, p. 110). They are another set of principles, in addition to those implanted by nature, which determine man's will into action (Defence, VII, p. 110). Since man is a "social animal," he expresses not only the influence of nature on his mind, but also of society. The social sympathies, learned entirely by experience, develop because man in society, "with all his passions and his pleasures, next becomes the object of the passions and pleasures of man; an additional class of emotions produces an augmented treasure of expressions" (Defence, VII, p. 110).

"Speculations on Metaphysics" explains how the social sympathies develop. It states that we are "intuitively conscious" of our own existence, and "of that connection in the train of our successive ideas, which we term our identity" (VII, p. 61). But since we do not know the true nature of existence, our awareness of our fellow human beings is

"founded upon a very complicated relation of ideas . . . " (VII, p. 61). This awareness would have to be developed by the cultivation of the imagination. Because of the effect of custom, ideas are associated in the mind. These ideas are revived by the imagination when a similar object is presented again to the senses. Finally, we experience a "periodical recurrence of masses of ideas, which our own voluntary determinations have, in one peculiar direction, no power to circumscribe or to arrest, and against the recurrence of which they can only imperfectly provide" (VII, p. 61).

We gradually become aware of "living beings in our own shape, and in shapes more or less analogous to our own" (VII, p. 61). This is the first stage of our awareness of our fellow beings. The second stage, as "Speculations on Morals" goes on to explain next, takes place when "accents and gestures" of these shapes are "referred to the feelings which they express" (VII, p. 75). Thus, we become aware that there are creatures similar to ourselves which experience kindred feelings.

It is significant that man measures "external" existence by referring to his own feeling. We can only recognize a fellow creature by referring to our own feelings. If we see a creature, similar to ourselves, signalling pleasure or pain with actions similar to our own, we recognize it as human. A similar criterion measures events in nature. A conception, revived by some event in nature, is accompanied by a feeling. Thus, we have some security that a certain event will follow. This feeling is due to the response implanted in man by nature. Man's only point of stability in a world of change is a pleasurable or painful feeling. Because there is no essential distinction between thoughts, "Speculations on Metaphysics" states that important distinctions of various degrees of

force are to be established between them if they are to be "subjects of ethical and oeconomical discussion" (VII, p. 60).

Along with his developing awareness of other men, man gains an awareness of what is good and evil regarding human relations. "Speculations on Morals" provides important background to this aspect of Shelley's philosophy. Significantly in that work he says that the "benevolent propensities are inherent in the human mind" (VII, p. 77). "A human being such as is man considered in his origin, a child a month old, has a very imperfect consciousness of the existence of other natures resembling itself" ("Speculations on Morals," VII, p. 74). It is entirely preoccupied with extinguishing the "pains with which it is perpetually assailed" (VII, pp. 74-75). "That is called good which produces pleasure; that is called evil which produces pain" (VII, p. 73).

As soon as the child/man in his origins becomes aware of the existence of its fellow men by referring "accents and gestures" significant of pain to the feelings that they suggest, it desires that these pains in its fellow creature should cease too (VII, p. 75). Since the child/man in his origins naturally desires the extinction of its own pains, the extension of this attitude to its fellow creature is also instinctive.

Since "pain is . . . apprehended to be evil for its own sake, without any other necessary reference to the mind by which [its existence is perceived than] such as is indispensible to its perception" (VII, p. 75), there is no need for abstract rules to govern relations between men. An intense apprehension of subtle signs of human feeling is deemed more important. Chapter II, Section ii, of "Speculations on Morals" advises that "Moral Science Consists in Considering the Difference, not the Resemblance, of Persons" (VII, p. 81). Man has too long based law on the resemblances.

Man, not knowing the true nature of existence, must test his observations by referring to his own feelings. Solitary man is selfish, for his mind is "incapable of receiving an accurate intimation of the nature of pain as existing in beings resembling itself" ("Speculations on Morals," VII, p. 75). But in society, when he learns to "acutely sympathise with the sufferings and enjoyments of others" (VII, p. 75), he will avoid those actions which cause pain and pursue those which cause pleasure. His moral progress depends upon an extension of his own feelings into the world around him.

An alert perception of subtle nuances of expression would awaken fully man's mind to the vast range of feelings which his fellow man is capable of. He can learn to sympathize fully with his fellow man by empathy, putting himself in the place of others. He also enlarges the circumference of his imagination by familiarizing himself with poetry and philosophy, the records of the varieties of human experience.[16]

Man's relationship with his fellow man, the realm of morality and the one area in which he can control good or evil, can be seen as two concentric circles. The inner circle represents those closest to him. Man, not knowing the true nature of existence, must test his observations by referring to his own feelings. It is relatively easy to recognize the signs which are significant of good or evil in the inner group; pleasure or pain are as evident as a smile or a grimace. Benevolence thus comes easily in a situation where man can immediately measure the feelings of his fellow beings.

However, the outer circle, including a much larger number of people,

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16 Shelley makes this suggestion in both "Speculations on Morals," VII, p. 75, and A Defence of Poetry, VII, p. 117.

presents a problem to man's powers of observation. Man is led by his benevolent propensities to regard every human being indifferently with whom he comes into contact. But the benevolent propensities "have preference only with respect to those who offer themselves most obviously to [his] notice" ("Speculations on Morals," VII, p. 77).

> Human beings are indiscriminating and blind; they will avoid inflicting pain, though that pain should be attended with eventual benefit; they will seek to confer pleasure without calculating the mischief that may result. They benefit one at the expense of many. ("Speculations on Morals," VII, p. 77)

It is difficult to tell if an action which benefits a member in the inner circle of relationships does not ultimately cause pain to the group as a whole. Man can no longer depend upon his immediate feelings of benevolence as excited by an empathy with those nearest to him. To fully bring about pleasure to the group as a whole, an Utilitarian principle which is part of Shelley's philosophy, man must cultivate his imagination by a careful observation of the consequences of his actions. A greater extension of man's feelings into the surrounding universe is required to include a much larger group of people.

An essay, "On the Punishment of Death," describes the cultivation of one such "combination" of ideas:

> The passion of revenge is originally nothing more than an habitual perception of the ideas of the sufferings of the person who inflicts an injury, as connected, as they are in a savage state, or in such portions of society as are yet undisciplined to civilization, with security that that injury will not be repeated in future. This feeling, engrafted upon superstition and confirmed by habit, at last loses sight of the only object for which it may be supposed to have been implanted, and becomes a passion and a duty to be pursued and fulfilled, even to the destruction of those ends to which it originally tended. (VI, p. 189)

Several ideas in this statement are relevant to my thesis. First is the fact that the social sympathies are engendered by an "habitual percep-

tion" and, secondly, that this involves the implanting of a "feeling" which would distinguish between good ideas and evil ones.

Thirdly, the fact that the consequences of actions have to be noted, implies that the mind cannot determine, in the first occurrence of an action, its moral tenour. One person injures another. The criminal is punished and the effects duly noted. The punishment should have a salutary effect. If it does not, its future application in an identical situation should be more severe or less. A process of experimentation is necessary to determine the proper proportion of punishment to mete out.[17] The habitual perception of these actions cultivates the imagination. "Speculations on Morals," describing a similar process, states that "The imagination thus acquires by exercise a habit as it were of perceiving and abhorring evil" (VII, p. 75). As the Defence states, the imagination is, thus, not only the author of "language, colour, and form," but of "religious and civil habits of action" (VII, p. 113).

The discovery that punishment may ultimately be beneficial, that it may be applied as a means of moral improvement, is probably accidental at first. Man in his origin would exist in a rude state for many years before the organization of his unconscious finally lifts him out of his savage condition. Eventually, however, acute observers, noting the effects of certain actions and by using trial and error, would learn how to fit means to ends which are desirable. The habitual perception of

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17 See also "Speculations on Morals": "It is in the due appreciating the general effects of their peculiarities, and in cultivating the habit of acquiring decisive knowledge respecting the tendencies arising out of [them] in particular cases, that the the most important part of moral science consists" (VII, p. 82). The reference is to the actions of men.

those actions which successfully achieve the effects desired should result in a reinforcement of those views on the mind, and create a feeling of expectation which would enable man to determine the value of his judgment.

Once the combination of ideas has been implanted, the antecedent ones revive their correlatives, and feeling determines their good or evil nature. Thus man develops foresight, due to the cultivation of the imagination, which gives him control over the consequences of his actions. "Imagination or mind employed in prophetically [imaging forth] its objects is that faculty of human nature on which every gradation of its progress, nay, every, the minutest change depends" ("Speculations on Morals," VII, p. 75).

Man has to perceive subtle variations in human behaviour, not only for the imagination to revive correlative ideas effectively, but to continue the process of cultivating the imagination. Shelley stresses the importance of intensely apprehending the present, designating anyone who has this capability, a poet:

> For he not only beholds intensely the present as it is, and discovers those laws according to which present things ought to be ordered, but he beholds the future in the present, and his thoughts are the germs of the flower and the fruit of latest time. (Defence, VII, p. 112)

A few lines before this passage, Shelley states, "To be a poet is to apprehend the true and the beautiful, in a word, the good which exists in the relation, subsisting, first between existence and perception, and secondly between perception and expression" (VII, pp. 111-112).

CHAPTER IV

MAN'S DISSOCIATED SENSIBILITY AND EVIL

All of the creations of the imagination have an "integral unity". For example, originally, the habit of revenge was the idea of punishment leading to some beneficial effect. Man acts out of disinterested benevolence and an imaginative response determines the proportion of punishment to apply in any particular case. Gradually, however, man's feelings which determine the value of his imaginative response and guide his judgment, degenerate into passions, a breakdown which "On the Punishment of Death" describes:

> This feeling, engrafted upon superstition and confirmed by habit, at last loses sight of the only object for which it may be supposed to have been implanted, and becomes a passion and a duty to be pursued and fulfilled, even to the destruction of those ends to which it originally tended.[18] (VI, p. 189)

Through repetition, man forgets the qualitative value of punishment. He punishes for its own sake, forgetting its legitimate end. The feeling becomes a passion and man a mechanical and habitual agent. His reason, a conscious power, considering the relations between ideas, is unable to recall all the ideas associated with a particular event. Certain qualities are taken as defining the whole and man loses the essential unity

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18 Shelley similarly describes the decay of values in "On Life": "As men grow up . . . they become mechanical and habitual agents. Thus feelings and then reasonings are the combined result of a multitude of entangled thoughts, and of a series of what are called impressions, planted by reiteration" (VI, p. 196).

of the ideas. In the case of revenge, punishment becomes the quality which defines the habit as a whole:

> . . . Their daily occupations constraining them to a precise form in all their thoughts, they come to connect inseparably the idea of their own advantage with that of the death and torture of others. ("On the Punishment of Death," VI, pp. 188-189)

Man then applies punishment with no respect to its end. Other erroneous excesses would present a similar decay of values and separation between reason and imagination.

If man does not distinguish between the future and the past but lives intensely in the present, he would regard each event as different from another. He would not give any preference to any particular course of action, but, instead, all the particular events comprehended in the present action would be rendered entirely equal. This is the nature of chance and our ignorance of the real cause of any event should beget its influence on the understanding (Enquiries, pp. 56-57). As "Speculations on Morals" says, "In truth, no one action has, when considered in its whole extent, an essential resemblance with any other" (VII, p. 81).

If man has this passive mental condition, his imagination is free to render an imaginative response. "On the Punishment of Death" cites the savage and the illiterate, those who are still not dulled by society, as having the freest mental condition:

> The savage and the illiterate are but faintly aware of the distinction between the future and the past; they make actions belonging to periods so distinct, the subjects of similar feelings; they live only in the present, or in the past, as it is present. It is in this that the philosopher excels one of the many; it is this which distinguishes the doctrine of philosophic necessity from fatalism; and that determination of the will, by which it is the active source of future events, from that liberty or indifference, to which the abstract liability of irremediable actions is attached, according to the notions of the vulgar. (VI, p. 189)

Evil results when man consciously attempts to fit means to ends:

> This is the source of the erroneous excesses of Remorse and Revenge; the one extending itself over the future, and the other over the past; provinces in which their suggestions can only be the sources of evil. The purpose of a resolution to act more wisely and virtuously in future, and the sense of a necessity of caution in repressing an enemy, are the sources from which the enormous superstitions implied in the words cited have arisen. ("On the Punishment of Death," VI, p. 189)

"Ode to Liberty" describes creations of the imagination as "winged sound[s]" which soar "where Expectation never flew,/ Rending the veil of space and time asunder!" (11. 84-86).

Once man becomes habituated, he judges in terms of the past; his judgment is conscious, not unconscious. The present event may not fit his preconception and he may punish unjustly. This characteristic of the mind overshooting the mark for which it aims is the cause of the erroneous excesses in man's reasoning ("On the Punishment of Death," VI, p. 189). When thought is constrained to a precise form, the mind is not free to respond imaginatively.

The uniformity of events observable in nature leads man to follow a similar uniformity in his actions (Enquiries, Sect. VIII, Part I, pp. 80-96). The actions of men are thus grouped or categorized and the peculiar nature of actions is missed. Therefore, the correct imaginative response is not possible. For example, when a criminal commits a crime he is simply punished in response to a fixed law which may not fit the particular case. Only the imagination, with power over all the ideas in the mind, can respond efficiently to the peculiar nature of the case. A conscious attempt to fit means to ends may be the cause of injustice.

Chapter II, ii, of "Speculations on Morals," claiming that "no one action has, when considered in its whole extent, an essential resemblance

with any other," argues that moral progress depends upon noting differences in human actions, not their similarities (VII, p. 81). Subtle differences in human actions have to be noted in order to refer them to the correct feeling which they suggest. In this way the cultivation of the imagination, which is a continual process, can take place.

Reasoners, copying the creations of poets into the book of common life, forget that poets are only expressing their own mental determination and locate this mental determination in nature. The expression of the poet, which is only an "image" of the surrounding objects, becomes fixed. Reasoners, considering only the quantitative value of thoughts, forget the qualitative. Calculations based on these quantities lead to error when reasoners fail to accommodate them to our inner nature.

Calculations have to be accommodated to man's inner nature according to the pleasure-pain principle. The effects of each calculation must be noted so that it can be adjusted in order to bring about the desired pleasurable effect. In the act of revenge man only gradually learns through experience the degree of punishment to apply which benefits society as a whole. His imagination, cultivated through an habitual perception, can then give him a degree of certainty in his actions.

Lancelot Law Whyte in his book The Next Development in Man describes the effect of the failure to accommodate analytical reasoning to the inner nature of man:

> The essential feature of laissez faire was the assumption that the automatic operation of the quantity symbols, through the actions of individuals organizing their behaviour by means of them, would lead to the satisfaction of human needs.[19]

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19 Lancelot Law Whyte, The Next Development in Man (New York, 1950), p. 116.

The evil in this system was the fact that it did not provide for the "catharsis of rhythmic relaxation or satisfying achievement." Man was left instead "perpetually lusting for more."

> Another nought on an order, and the worldwide machinery of credit operated without scrutiny of purpose or result, and thousands more were able to live or compelled to die, to work more or less, to experience once again the instability of their employment.[20]

Shelley pointed out this same principle in the Defence. He states that reason, which has "enlarged the limits of the empire of man over the external world, has, for want of the poetical faculty, proportionally circumscribed those of the internal world" (VII, p. 134). There is more "scientific and economical knowledge than can be accommodated to the just distribution of the produce which it multiplies" (VII, p. 134). New model cars are poured out without consideration of the benefit of society as a whole. The unjust distribution of produce creates selfishness and inequality, which in turn breed other evils:

> To what but a cultivation of the mechanical arts in a degree disproportioned to the presence of the creative faculty, which is the basis of all knowledge, is to be attributed the abuse of all invention for abridging and combining labour, to the exasperation of the inequality of mankind? From what other cause has it arisen that these inventions which should have lightened, have added a weight to the curse imposed on Adam? (Defence, VII, p. 134)

Thus the imagination gap in man's reasoning resulted in the evils of the Industrial Revolution.

The machine is something new to man. Since its operation is not instinctive to man's nature, he must learn from experience, observing carefully the consequences of his actions. After habitually perceiving an action for a period of time he develops a feeling which helps him to determine the relation between production and its effect. This wisdom

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20 Whyte, p. 116.

gives foresight which guides his future actions.

Man has long held the belief that reason is the more useful faculty. But Shelley debates this point in the Defence. When man considers the value of anything he usually refers to utilitarian purposes, thinking only in terms of the limited sense of what is useful in order to satisfy his animal nature. The imagination creates all of man's ideas; reason only considers those which can be subservient to his needs, without accommodating the idea to man's inner nature. The imagination shows the most useful habits man can follow in accommodating the invention to his needs. We have to know where we have been before we know where we are going and only the imagination can efficiently determine this.

CHAPTER V

THE PERPETUATION OF EVIL

The tyranny of signs over the mind of man perpetuates the evil which infects society. Names such as "KING" and "PRIEST" are the "sperm/ Of what makes life foul, cankerous, and abhorred . . . " ("Ode to Liberty," 11. 222-223). Shelley wonders why man does not rise up and throw down the symbols of power.

> Oh that the free would stamp the impious name
> Of KING into the dust . . ..
> . . . Lift the victory-flashing sword,
> And cut the snaky knots of this foul gordian word . . ..
> ("Ode to Liberty," 11. 211-218)

Shelley's poetry and prose continually exhort man to throw down signs and regain imaginative freedom: "This need not be; ye might arise, and will/ That gold should lose its power, and thrones their glory" (The Revolt of Islam, VIII, xvi, 11. 3334-3335).

Words which represent different habits of action decay in value, a process Shelley describes in the Defence:

> [The language of a poet is] vitally metaphorical; that is, it marks the before unapprehended relations of things and perpetuates their apprehension, until the words which represent them, become, through time, signs for portions or classes of thoughts, instead of pictures of integral thoughts; and then if no new poets should arise to create afresh the associations which have been thus disorganised, language will be dead to all the nobler purposes of human intercourse.
> (VII, p. 111)

The word, "aristocracy," represents one such decay in value. Shelley points out in A Philosophical View of Reform that the word no longer has

its original meaning;

> Since usage has consecrated the distinction of the word aristocracy from its original meaning . . . . Let me be assumed to employ the word aristocracy in that ordinary sense which signifies that class of persons who possess a right to the produce of the labour of others, without dedicating to the common service any labour in return. (VII, p. 27)

Once man forgets the qualitative value of habits and words, he has only a collection of "facts," gordian knots which entangle the mind. The poetry, the expression of man's imagination, is drained out of science, politics and religion, and they become "Signs of thought's empire over thought . . . " (The Triumph of Life, l. 211). This is the imagination gap which Shelley pictures in the Defence:

> . . . The presence or absence of poetry in its most poetic and universal form, has been found to be connected with good and evil in conduct and habit. (VII, pp. 120-121)

According to "Speculations on Morals," "much of the confusion which has involved the theory of morals" has been caused by a "common sophism, which, like many others, depends upon the abuse of a metaphorical expression to a literal purpose" (VII, p. 74).

When man submits to an external order which no longer accommodates the internal, he is prone to commit error. The surface of society, however, is so overspread with the veil of familiarity that, although man may try to think freely, he is so enmeshed in error that he is unable to see what is truth, a problem which "Speculations on Morals" points out:

> Almost all that which is ostensible submits to that legislature created by the general representation of the past feelings of mankind--imperfect as it is from a variety of causes, as it exists in the government, the religion, and domestic habits. Those who do not nominally, yet actually, submit to the same power. The external features of their conduct, indeed, can no more escape it, than the clouds can escape from the stream of the wind; and his opinion, which he often hopes he has dispassionately secured from all contagion of prejudice and vulgarity, would be found, on examination, to be the inevitable

> excrescence of the very usages from which he vehemently dissents. (VII, pp. 82-83)

Even a poet in the "intervals of inspiration . . . becomes a man, and is abandoned to the sudden reflux of the influence under which others habitually live" (Defence, VII, p. 137).

From the moment of his birth, man learns to fit into the moulds of society: "The little Actor cons another part." Man learns to act as if he agreed in necessity. This belief is most beneficial in man's relation to the physical universe; he sets his alarm clock in expectation that the sun will rise on the morrow; but its effect is most pernicious in relation to morals. Having lost his intense apprehension of reality, his spontaneity, he accepts all of his various passions, such as "revenge," in their adulterated form. His habit of mind prevents him from questioning the intrinsic value of his habits and such things as kings, priests, and money. Trained as a soldier, he marches to war, loses a limb, and proudly wears his badges. A Philosophical View of Reform refers to war as a "kind of superstition; the pageantry of arms and badges corrupts the imagination of men" (VII, p. 53).

Dickens in Hard Times laments the lack of poetry in industrialized Victorian England. The hard philosophy of utilitarianism demands that one remake himself to fit the Procrustean bed of facts. Sissy Jupe, who lives with horses, is unable to define one when called upon to do so by Gradgrind. For her, the qualitative aspect of horses which she knows intimately is inexpressible. Bitzer, Gradgrind's model pupil who has been successfully filled to the brim with facts, easily pours out a description:

> Quadruped. Gramnivorous. Forty teeth, namely, twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in

> the spring; in marshy countries, sheds hoofs, too. Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth.

Dickens exposes the evil of a strict utilitarianism which refuses to accept the qualitative element of reality and which attempts to define reality in terms of what can be weighed and measured.

Even the doctrines of Christ, as the Defence indicates, become evil when man forgets their qualitative value:

> Whatever of evil [the Christian doctrines] may have contained sprang from the extinction of the poetic principle, connected with the progress of despotism and superstition. (VII, p. 126)

Shelley reminds the reader in A Philosophical View of Reform that a reading of the New Testament will expose the erroneous excesses of the established churches:

> The New Testament is in everybody's hand, and the few who ever read it with the simple sincerity of an unbiassed judgment may perceive how distinct from the opinions of any of those professing themselves establishers were the doctrines and the actions of Jesus Christ. (VII, p. 8)

The test of an unbiased reading of the New Testament, Shelley goes on to say, was made during the Reformation and the "then existing hierarchy" was found wanting. "Ode to Liberty" also refers to this event:

> Luther caught thy wakening glance;
> Like lightning, from his leaden lance
> Reflected, it dissolved the visions of the trance
> In which, as in a tomb, the nations lay . . ..
> (11. 141-144)

The "poetry" in the New Testament recalls man to the original rhythm and order of Christianity.

Shelley applauds Berkeley and Hume in A Philosophical View of Reform because they

> have clearly established the certainty of our ignorance with respect to those obscure questions which under the name of

> religious truths have been the watchwords of contention and the symbols of unjust power ever since they were distorted by the narrow passions of the immediate followers of Jesus from that meaning to which philosophers are even now restoring them. (VII, p. 9)

The chief role of philosophers, defined in "On Life," is to reduce the "mind to that freedom in which it would have acted, but for the misuse of words and signs, the instruments of its own creation (VI, p. 195). "Speculations on Morals" also suggests a similar role:

> The misguided imaginations of men have rendered the ascertaining of what is not true, the principle direct service which metaphysical enquiry can bestow upon moral science. Moral science itself is the doctrine of the voluntary actions of man, as a sentient and social being. These actions depend on the thoughts in his mind. But there is a mass of popular opinion, from which the most enlightened persons are seldom wholly free, into the truth or falsehood of which it is encumbent on us to enquire before we can arrive at any firm conclusions as to the conduct which we ought to pursue in the regulation of our own minds, or towards our fellow-beings; or before we can ascertain the elementary laws, according to which these thoughts, from which these actions flow, are originally combined. (VII, p. 71)

Shelley has the usual poet's plaint about the inadequacy of words for expression. The Defence recognizes, however, that language is superior to other forms of expression, for it

> has relation to thoughts alone; but all other materials, instruments, and conditions of art, have relations among each other, which limit and interpose between conception and expression. (VII, p. 113)

But some thoughts are too profound for expression. As the "mind in creation is as a fading coal" (Defence, VII, p. 135), our consciousness is unable to conceive of an idea created by the imagination in its full light; the passage from "passive perception to voluntary contemplation" is too steep ("Speculations on Metaphysics," VII, p. 64). In Revolt of Islam, Shelley finds one such conception beyond the power of words:

> Like what may be conceived of this vast dome,

> When from the depths which thought can seldom pierce
> Genius beholds it rise, his native home,
> Girt by the deserts of the Universe;
> Yet, nor in painting's light, or mightier verse,
> Or sculpture's marble language, can invest
> That shape to mortal sense--such glooms immerse
> That incommunicable sight, and rest
> Upon the labouring brain and overburdened breast.
> (I, L, 11. 568-576)

In "Ode to Liberty," Shelley wishes that the veil drawn by words would vanish:

> Oh, that the words which make the thoughts obscure
> From which they spring, as clouds of glimmering dew
> From a white lake blot Heaven's blue portraiture,
> Were stripped of their thin masks and various hue
> And frowns and smiles and splendours not their own,
> Till in the nakedness of false and true
> They stand before their Lord, each to receive its due . . ..
> (11. 234-240)

Unlike most poets, however, Shelley foresees a time when words will no longer slide, crack, break or decay under tension. When man finally "falls" from evil into a state of grace, the event Prometheus Unbound describes, he will command the universe and language will also come under his control:

> . . . Language is a perpetual Orphic song,
> Which rules with Daedal harmony a throng
> Of thoughts and forms, which else senseless and shapeless were. (Prometheus Unbound, IV, 11. 415-417)

Shelley prefers the model rather than the rule, for a metaphor leaves the object intact for others to interpret. Reason, attempting to describe the action or thing itself, substitutes traits rather than describing the appearance of the object. Images, such as metaphors or similes, do not violate the object, but leave it intact.

Poets recreate the world for man. Their poetry

> compels us to feel that which we perceive, and to imagine that which we know. It creates anew the universe, after it has been annihilated in our minds by the recurrence of impressions

blunted by reiteration. (Defence, VII, p. 137)

Their language is "vitally metaphorical" (Defence, VII, p. 111). Instead of describing the moon in quantitative terms, they attempt to describe its qualities. They do not attempt to name a thing, but leave it unlabelled. Poets create afresh the associations of words by describing objects with metaphors (VII, p. 111), an activity which the Defence states is always necessary:

> . . . If no new poets should arise to create afresh the associations which have been thus disorganised, language will be dead to all the nobler purposes of human intercourse. (VII, p. 111)

Men of feeling have arisen throughout history to throw off the unnecessary yoke of familiarity. Revolutions in Shelley's own day evidenced to him that man need not submit to oppressions he himself had created. The 1820 revolution in Spain typically illustrated to Shelley man's capacity to regain his freedom, and occasioned the writing of "Ode to Liberty." The ode records the physical and moral progress of man, beginning with the creation of the universe. In it Shelley recalls the heights and the abysses of man's moral history.

The liberty which Shelley refers to is a freedom to act out of "disinterestedness" which, in "Speculations on Morals," he feels constitutes "the majesty of our nature" (VII, p. 76). "On the Punishment of Death" expresses a similar conception of liberty. If man lives intensely in the present, he will not distinguish between the future and the past. His imagination can then respond freely to events. This is what distinguishes

> philosophic necessity from fatalism; and that determination of the will, by which it is the active source of future events, from that liberty or indifference, to which the abstract liability of irremediable actions is attached, according to the notions of the vulgar. ("On the Punishment of Death," VI, p. 189)

If man's imagination can respond freely, then poetry can come back into his habits. The resultant intermixture of imagination and reason kills error. "Ode to Liberty" urges Italy to "Gather thy blood into thy heart" (l. 209) in order to free herself from tyranny. Yeats, in "Easter, 1916," likewise observes that evil results when man loses his imaginative response to events. The hearts of the Irish patriots have become stone because of "Too long a sacrifice." Moral progress results when liberty is present for then the imaginative response is unbound. The absence of liberty causes evil, because of the unmitigated exercise of the calculating faculty.

In Shelley's review of history, it would seem difficult to distinguish events which exemplify creations of the poetic faculty from those of reason. But actions of men which are not fixed in space and time are expressions of the imagination. The order reflected in these creations, according to the Defence, is eternal, a "creation of actions according to the unchangeable forms of human nature" (VII, p. 115). It is in this sense that the doctrines of Christ, discussed earlier, and all great creations of poetry, are eternal. They reflect a rhythm and order which will forever be true of relations between men. For this reason, the Defence states that the epics of Homer are eternal:

> Homer embodied the ideal perfection of his age in human character . . .. The truth and beauty of friendship, patriotism, and persevering devotion to an object, were unveiled to their depths in these immortal creations . . .. (VII, p. 116)

Reason, we learn from the Defence, is operative only in space and time and is relevant to a "certain combination of events which can never again recur" (VII, p. 115). Moral progress results only when man rises above the temptations of the temporal order; he must not submit to external necessity. As the imagination acts unconsciously, man is unable

to predict its operation. Its influence can come at any time to lift the veil of familiarity from his actions. The Defence thus notes several acts of the Romans as being direct expressions of the imagination:

> The life of Camillus, the death of Regulus; the expectations of the Senators, in their godlike state, of the victorious Gauls; the refusal of the Cannae, were not the consequences of a refined calculation of the probable personal advantage to result from such a rhythm and order in the shews of life, to those who were at once the poets and the actors of these immortal dramas. The imagination beholding the beauty of this order, created it out of itself according to its own idea; the consequence was empire, and the reward ever-living fame.
> (VII, p. 125)

Thus, in the "Ode to Liberty," habits of action due to the imagination are distinguished from those of the reason by their universal or partial nature.

When "Ode to Liberty" begins, the earth is a "chaos and a curse" (l. 22), for liberty is not in existence. Instead, there is "power from worst producing worst" (l. 23). In the origins of civilization, the instincts which are part of man's solitary, and thus selfish, nature determine his actions. Beasts warred on beasts, worms on worms, and men on men, because "each heart was as a hell of storms" (l. 30). The effects of nature are harmful in some instances, because man is a social animal. The influence of the imagination and reason tempers his heart, but a harmony in social relations must develop first to free him. Liberty is a state of mind and does not come until the imagination has been cultivated to the point where it can lift man out of his savagery. Later, when man's reason becomes the dominant power, he is bound to a necessity of a different kind. The god in man or the animal can equally devour the other.

As long as the components of man's nature (his reason, imagination

and senses) are dissociated, he is subject to error. The reason, unable to recall all the ideas associated with an event, fits Promethean ideas into Procrustean beds. The independent activity of the imagination, fancy, produces fictions. An object presented to the memory or senses properly activates the imagination. Attempting to satisfy his senses, man is no better off than in his original solitary state. Unable to properly fit means to ends, he may cause pain to others and his own gratification may only be a partial one. Moral progress takes place only when his instincts are integrated with his reason and when he develops his knowledge of human nature and of social relations. These developments are possible with the cultivation of the imagination. A harmony among these three powers and a resultant progression in morals is achieved through love, the force which cultivates the imagination.

"A Discourse on the Manners of the Ancients," states that there must be a balance among the powers of man; an imbalance in any one direction produces evil:

> . . . Love . . . is the universal thirst for a communion not merely of the senses, but of our whole nature, intellectual, imaginative and sensitive; and which, when individualized, becomes an imperious necessity, only to be satisfied by the complete or partial, actual or supposed, fulfilment of its claims. (VII, p. 228)

When man is no longer determined by necessity, whether sensual or rational, he is free and his imaginative response is unhampered.

The imagination keeps the proper balance between the reason and the instincts. In this sense, the imagination may be defined as a biorational power. It does not unify the human psyche, but the entire man. The archetypes in man's mind need the instincts to realize them. If the imagination is destroyed in man, man is destroyed.

The cultivation of the "social sympathies" takes time. During the formation of early civilizations, such as the Egyptian, man was "savage, cunning, blind, and rude" (l. 37); liberty still did not exist. "For thou wert not," which Shelley repeats in line eight of both stanzas two and three, becomes a kind of refrain emphasizing the fact that man is still a victim of change and his own passions.

Lines 46-50 suggest the harmonizing effect of nature, a power which Shelley also describes in "On Love":

> Hence in solitude, or in that deserted state when we are surrounded by human beings, and yet they sympathise not with us, we love the flowers, the grass, and the waters, and the sky. In the motion of the very leaves of spring, in the blue air, there is then found a secret correspondence with our heart. There is eloquence in the tongueless wind, and a melody in the flowing brooks and the rustling of the reeds beside them, which by their inconceivable relation to something within the soul, awaken the spirits to a dance of breathless rapture, and bring tears of mysterious tenderness to the eyes, like the enthusiasm of patriotic success, or the voice of one beloved singing to you alone. (VI, p. 202)

Nature implants an instinct in man and, soon, his thoughts go along in the same train as nature. This harmony between man and nature accounts for the sympathy that man feels for its objects. Wordsworth notes a similar effect of nature in Book One of The Prelude. He claims that the sound of the Derwent River, mixing with his nurse's songs, composed his thoughts and gave him

> Amid the fretful dwellings of mankind
> A foretaste, a dim earnest, of the calm
> That nature breathes among the hills and groves.
> (ll. 279-281)

Once man's thoughts are in tune with nature, his imagination begins to play an active role; he develops foresight. Shelley describes the ocean waves, resounding in caves along the shores of Greece, as "prophetic echoes" (l. 50). Once man learns the harmonies in nature he is no

longer its subject.

The Greeks, when first pictured by Shelley, are unable to practice husbandry: "The vine, the corn, the olive mild,/ Grew savage yet, to human use unreconciled . . . " (11. 52-53). But soon they are able to create Athens. Athens, the first home of liberty, has been created by "the will/ Of man" (11. 70-71). The organization of man's unconscious storehouse has reached the point where his imaginative response can partially free him from error.

The Greeks immortalized their poetic creations in marble. These forms, along with the works of "bards and sages" (1. 80), serve as oracles (1. 75) for liberty. The ideal qualities of beauty, honour and courage portrayed in Greek sculpture and verse can reawaken man's imagination in times when these values decay. The "earth awakening blast" of Grecian art, like the original purity of Christian doctrines mentioned earlier, exposes the corrupted character of religion and oppression, and rends "the veil of space and time asunder" (1. 86).

Shelley recognizes Rome as the next home of liberty. Rome is said to feed on the milk of the "Elysian food" of Greece (11. 93-94). The Defence explains this, saying that the poetry of Rome is but a shadow of the Grecian expression (VII, p. 125). But the Defence recognizes certain creations of the Romans as direct expressions of the imagination:

> The true poetry of Rome lived in its institutions; for whatever of beautiful, true, and majestic, they contained, could have sprung only from the faculty which creates the order in which they consist. (VII, p. 125)

Acts of heroism by Roman Senators, and such men as Camillus, Atilius and Regulus, are also recognized as direct expressions of the imagination because they were performed out of disinterestedness; they were not a

"refined calculation of the probable personal advantage to result from such a rhythm and order in the shews of life" (Defence, VII, p. 125). When man consciously tries to fit means to ends, he falls short of the mark; "Expectation," a determination of the will by which it is the active source of future events, cannot, as the "Ode to Liberty" points out, fly where Liberty soars (11. 84-86).

Liberty leaves man when he forgets the metaphorical value of things: " . . . When/ gold profaned thy Capitolian throne,/ Thou didst desert . . ." (11. 99-101). When man forgets the legitimate ends of gold, it becomes an object pursued for its own sake. The quantitative value of gold enslaves man. Lacking any feeling for its qualitative value, he falls into error.

Another sign that liberty has departed is the development of a dictatorship in Rome: "The senate of the tyrants . . . sunk prone/ Slaves of one tyrant . . . " (11. 102-103). When the original unity of thought which makes up the customs and habits of the Roman institutions is forgotten, certain offices come to stand for the whole. Decay of the original value of the institutions grows until axes and rods become signs and symbols of power. Stanza XV describes "KING" which Shelley here calls a "foul gordian word" as

> . . . weak itself as stubble, yet can bind
> Into a mass, irrefragably firm,
> The axes and the rods which awe mankind . . ..
> (11. 219-221)

Evil comes upon men because their creations no longer contain the poetical element. Chaos and curse return to the earth and it becomes an "undistinguishable heap" (1. 120). Liberty deserts for a thousand years, from the time of Caesar through the dark ages. Shelley refers to the

Medieval Church as the "Galilean Serpent" which creeps forth "from its sea of death, to kill and burn . . . " (l. 118). Meanwhile, Liberty, in exile, teaches the woods, waves and streams that "sublimest lore which man had dared unlearn . . . " (l. 113).

Liberty returns with Alfred who brought peace to England and revived learning. His reign, the central period of Anglo-Saxon history, provided sound policies and security for his successors. Freedom from war and strife gives man an opportunity to cultivate art and to enlarge and refine his sympathies.

The creation of city states restores peace in Italy. The freedom that man's spirit then gains makes possible the Renaissance and the flourishing of the arts. When man has freedom he can think, investigate his own nature, and create new forms of expression. He can also see the incompatibility which exists between the old institutions and his inner nature. In times of oppression by government, war, and religion, man is blinded and his moral progress is not only stunted, but regresses. He is not free to rearrange the forms under which he lives. But the "sunlight shafts [of Liberty] pierce tempest-winged Error . . . " (l. 138).

Luther's pen reflects this light of liberty (l. 142); applying the test of the New Testament to the hierarchy of time by going back to the original unity of Christian thought, he pointed out the discrepancies between Christ's teaching and the superstructure of the Church. Milton also sees beyond the night in which man lives and his work serves to awaken man from his trance. The American and French revolutions are also seen as the return of Liberty.

"Ode to Liberty" ends with an appeal to man to throw down the "impious name/ Of KING" (ll. 211-212) and the "pale name of PRIEST" (l. 228).

Words, signs, and habits of action are merely arbitrary creations formed at one time by the imagination. They are suitable at a certain stage of man's moral progress, but, now that their original purpose has been forgotten, they should be discarded. They no longer contain any poetry, no intermixture of reason and imagination. The consciousness, exercising a tyranny over the unconscious, enslaves man.

The word, "PRIEST," should "shrink and dwindle/ Into the hell from which it first was hurled" (11. 228-229), that "hell" being the human heart. Man must return to the original purity of his poetic expressions; he must cut down the "overgrowth of ages." Shelley calls for a revival of the intermixture of imagination and reason:

> Oh, that the wise from their bright minds would kindle
> Such lamps within the dome of this dim world,
> That the pale name of PRIEST might shrink and dwindle . . ..
> (11. 226-228)

Poets who expose this "over-growth" free man from the gordian knots which entangle his mind. Man then becomes the master of his own destiny:

> He who taught man to vanquish whatsoever
> Can be between the cradle and the grave
> Crowned him the King of Life. (11. 241-243)

Shelley warns, in closing, that the efforts of the wise may be only a "vain endeavour!/ If on his own high will, a willing slave,/ [Man] has enthroned the oppression and the oppressor" (11. 243-245). Man creates his own evil. Liberty only exists when his mind has been conditioned to the point where his imaginative response can free him from space and time when he acts out of disinterested benevolence:

> Blind Love, and equal Justice, and the Fame
> Of what has been, the Hope of what will be?
> O Liberty! if such could be thy name
> Wert thou disjoined from them, or they from thee . . ..
> (11. 264-267)

The sonnet, "Political Greatness," points out that if man is to be master

of his own destiny, he must first rule himself;

> Man who man would be,
> Must rule the empire of himself; in it
> Must be supreme, establishing his throne
> On vanquished will, quelling the anarchy
> Of hopes and fears, being himself alone.
> (11. 10-14)

CHAPTER VI

LOVE AND THE FALL FROM EVIL

Shelley, in the tradition initiated by Shaftesbury, emphasizes feeling rather than reason. Feelings indicate man's state of well-being in relation to the universe. Man becomes aware of moral progress when his pleasurable feelings become greater and more prolonged. He prepares the way for enlarging his sympathies when he investigates the forms under which he lives and exposes any incompatibility between them and his nature. There is a certain order or rhythm in life which Shelley calls the beautiful and the true (Defence, VII, p. 111). Man must consider his own nature in any system devised to regulate society, for there is a certain order or rhythm in his habits which affords him the greatest pleasure. The closer that he gets to this order, the freer he will be from evil. The Defence states that the "instrument" of moral progress is the imagination and in the same passage we also learn that the great secret of morals is love (VII, p. 118).

The Defence explains that love is a "going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own" (VII, p. 118). This empathic state of mind cultivates the imagination. By going out of his own nature and referring "accents and gestures significant" of different feelings to his own feelings, man becomes aware of the feelings of others. He learns to recognize natures similar to his own and to avoid pain and promote pleasure.

Love opposes selfishness. In his original solitary state, man is unaware of the existence of other natures similar to his own. His feelings are circumscribed within a very small area and he is selfish. The reasoner, who is the product of a civilization which has overgrown itself, is also selfish, because his calculations, dissociated from imagination, are narrow. His world becomes more and more circumscribed as his values continue to decay. He acts to protect his own interests, benefiting an inner circle, but forgets society as a whole. Man must regain his awareness of the feelings of others. Love, acting to cultivate the imagination, brings the poetry back into human relations and lifts men "out of the dull vapours of the little world of self" (Defence, VII, p. 128).

Moral progress results when man intensely apprehends life. He can then see beyond the apparent uniformity and, thus, lift the veil of familiarity. Shelley warns in "Speculations on Morals" that no one action, when considered in its entirety, is essentially similar to any other. Man must note the particular characteristics of each human action in order for moral progress to take place:

> It is in the due appreciating the general effects of their peculiarities, and in cultivating the habit of acquiring decisive knowledge respecting the tendencies arising out of [them] in particular cases, that the most important part of moral science consists. ("Speculations On Morals," VII, p. 82)

As man's imagination is more fully cultivated, he becomes more free from error. His nature becomes more fully integrated. If his nature is divided, love becomes an "imperious necessity." Driven by his senses, man may only achieve a partial satisfaction of his needs ("On Love," VII, p. 228). He develops his imagination fully by identifying with as many other thoughts, actions, and persons as possible. Epipsychidion warns that the man who has a limited imagination becomes trapped in time and

falls into error;

> Narrow
> The heart that loves, the brain that contemplates,
> The life that wears, the spirit that creates
> One object, and one form, and builds thereby
> A sepulchre for its eternity.
> (11. 169-173)

A few lines before this passage, Shelley, referring to the imagination's power to dispel error, identifies love with the imagination:

> Love is like understanding, that grows bright,
> Gazing on many truths; 'tis like thy light,
> Imagination! which from earth and sky,
> And from the depths of human fantasy,
> As from a thousand prisms and mirrors, fills
> The Universe with glorious beams, and kills
> Error, the worm, with many a sun-like arrow
> Of its reverberated lightning. (11. 162-169)

The madman in Julian and Maddalo exemplifies man's failure to cultivate his imagination fully. Julian suspects that a "'want of that true theory, still/ Which seeks a "soul of goodness" in things ill/ Or in himself or others . . . '" (11. 203-205) caused the madman's insanity. The madman states that "'loathèd scorn and outrage unrelenting/ Met love excited by far other seeming . . . '" (11. 333-334). The madman had fallen in love, but was scorned. The woman was not his sympathetic equal. If the madman had acquired more completely "decisive knowledge" regarding the effects of particular actions, he could have avoided error. He would have perceived that the woman would not harmonize with his nature.

Both the Defence (VII, p. 118) and "On the Manners of the Ancients" (VII, p. 227) note that man's attitude toward love has changed through the ages. As love is more perfectly realized, the imagination becomes enlarged and refined, bringing about a resultant change in man's institutions. Both of the works cited above state that Greek civilization

was founded upon an imperfection. As the "On the Manners of the Ancients" goes on to explain, the Greeks lacked the "legitimate object" of sentimental love. Their institutions reflect this incomplete realization of man's nature:

> . . . All the virture and the wisdom of the Periclean age arose under other institutions, in spite of the diminution which personal slavery and the inferiority of women, recognised by law and opinion, must have produced in the delicacy, the strength, the comprehensiveness, and the accuracy of their conceptions, in moral, political, and metaphysical science, and perhaps in every other art and science. (VII, p. 227)

Man's nature is quite complex, for his instincts are highly refined. "On the Manners of the Ancients" explains that man, even in his "wildest state . . . [is] . . . a social being" (VII, p. 228). There is a certain "rhythm or order" in his habits peculiar to his nature. "On the Manners of the Ancients" states that man's instincts become "more intimate and complete . . . in proportion to the development which [his] nature receives from civilisation . . . " (VII, p. 228). For example, the "Ancients" defines the sentiment of love as a "universal thirst" for a "communion not merely of the senses, but of our whole nature, intellectual, imaginative and sensitive . . . " (VII, p. 228).

The essay, "On Love," defining love, indicates that man's instincts are similar to an animal's and are not rationalistic archetypes. They also are present at birth:

> We are born into the world, and there is something within us which, from the instant that we live, more and more thirsts after its likeness. It is probably in correspondence with this law that the infant drains milk from the bosom of its mother; this propensity develops itself with the development of our nature.[22] ("On Love," VI, p. 201)

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22 Shelley states in several places that an "instinct" in man determines his actions. In an earlier draft of the Defence, Shelley defines the operation of the imagination as making an "instinctive adjustment" of

This interpretation is similar to Hume's. In An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding he states that instincts are innate:

> It is more conformable to the ordinary wisdom of nature to secure so necessary an act of the mind, by some instinct or mechanical tendency, which may be infallible in its operations, may discover itself at the first appearance of life and thought, and may be independent of all the laboured deductions of the understanding. (Enquiries, p. 55)

A few pages later in the Enquiry, we learn that the instinct in man is similar to that in animals:

> Though the instinct be different, yet still it is an instinct, which teaches a man to avoid the fire; as much as that, which teaches a bird, with such exactness, the art of incubation, and the whole economy and order of its nursery. (Enquiries, p. 108)

Therefore, although the Greeks lacked the "legitimate object" of sentimental love, they still were fully capable of realizing it, for this sympathy is an instinct which is part of man's nature.

"On the Manners of the Ancients" states that the natural attraction for a man is a woman, but because of the way Greek society was established, women were slaves and not on the same level as men. The men could not

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"sounds or motions . . . to . . . impressions" (VII, p. 352). In the same sentence he says that this "principle" is found "perhaps within all sentient beings" (VII, p. 109). In "On the Manners of the Ancients," a passage pertinent to this problem adds some complication, for there are two versions of it. One, in an excerpt of the "Ancients" published by Thomas Medwin in the Athenaeum for September 29, 1832, reads, "The mind selects among those who most resemble it, that which is most its archetype and instinctively fills up the interstices of the imperfect image . . . " (VII, p. 362). The other, published by Mary Shelley in 1840, reads, "This object of sentimental love, or its archetype, forever exists in the mind, which selects among those who resemble it, that which most resembles it; and instinctively etc." (VII, p. 228). Notwithstanding Shelley's, or Mary Shelley's, calling the instinct an "archetype," the important distinction made is that the mind "instinctively" fills up the interstices of the imperfect image. In Prometheus Unbound, after man's fall into grace at the end of Act III, Shelley reaffirms man's animal nature: " . . . man/ Passionless?--no, yet free from guilt or pain,/ Which were, for his will made or suffered them . . . " (III, iv, ll. 197-199).

find their equal, except in their own sex, but this does not represent a full realization of man's nature. Institutions are created by the imagination, but since the imagination was not fully developed, neither were the institutions.

Women have since become equal to men, and their freedom, according to the Defence, "produced the poetry of sexual love" (VII, p. 127). Shelley does not know for sure what caused the emancipation of women, but he suggests in the "Ancients," and the Defence, that it may

> arise from some imperfect influence of the doctrines of Jesus Christ, . . . or from the institutions of chivalry, or from a certain fundamental difference of physical nature existing in the Celts, or from a combination of all or any of these causes, acting on each other . . .. (VII, p. 227)

Since modern Europeans have more fully realized their nature, their imagination is more enlarged and refined and their institutions represent an improvement over the Greek. For Shelley, social progress is connected with moral progress.

Man will free himself from evil altogether when his imagination is fully cultivated. Love, by cultivating the imagination, integrates reason and imagination; and man, contrarily to the Gnostic tradition of the emanation and fall of creation, falls into grace. There is a certain order in the "shews of life," according to the Defence, called the "true and the beautiful" (VII, p. 111). When man's imagination is enlarged and refined, he comes closer to experiencing the harmony which underlies existence, including social relations.

By the cultivation of the imagination lifting the veil of familiarity from life, man reaches a truer integration of his personality. He realizes a certain rhythm and order in his habits from which he derives an intenser and purer pleasure. As was pointed out, the Greek practice of

love is irreconcilable to what Shelley feels mankind can attain:

> This much is to be admitted that, represent this passion as you will, there is something totally irreconcilable in its cultivation to the beautiful order of social life, to an equal participation in which all human beings have an indefeasible claim and from which half of the human race by the Greek arrangement were excluded.[23]

Poetry, like love, also cultivates man's imagination. It enlarges and refines his sympathies with the ideal conceptions embodied in its form. These are ideas from which man derives an intenser and purer pleasure. As man cultivates his imagination, he assimilates the "beautiful" which he perceives and rejects imperfections, thus forming a miniature within himself of ideal forms of conduct which forms a basis for judgment:

> We dimly see within our intellectual nature a miniature as it were of our entire self, yet deprived of all that we condemn or despise, the ideal prototype of every thing excellent or lovely that we are capable of conceiving as belonging to the nature of man. Not only the portrait of our external being, but an assemblage of the minutest particles of which our nature is composed; a mirror whose surface reflects only the forms of purity and brightness; a soul within our soul that describes a circle around its proper paradise, which pain, and sorrow, and evil dare not overleap. ("On Love," VI, pp. 201-202)[24]

With this more refined set of instincts which determines his will into

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23 Percy Bysshe Shelley, "On the Manners of the Ancient Greeks," in Shelley's Prose: Or the Trumpet of a Prophecy, ed. David L. Clark (New Mexico, 1954), p. 223.

24 See Shelley's preface to "Alastor": "[The poet] images to himself the Being whom he loves. Conversant with speculations of the sublimest and most perfect natures, the vision in which he embodies his own imaginations unites all of wonderful, or wise, or beautiful, which the poet, the philosopher, or the lover could depicture. The intellectual faculties, the imagination, the functions of sense, have their respective requisitions on the sympathy of corresponding powers in other human beings. The Poet is represented as uniting these requisitions, and attaching them to a single image. He seeks in vain for a prototype of his conception."(I, p. 173)

action, man feels a want in imperfect objects around him. Thus, unlike the solitary man, he is no longer subject to change:

> . . . Poetry defeats the curse which binds us to be subjected to the accident of surrounding impressions. And whether it spreads its own figured curtain, or withdraws life's dark veil from before the scene of things, it equally creates for us a being within our being. It makes us the inhabitants of a world to which the familiar world is a chaos.
> (Defence, VII, p. 137)

The ideal prototype, the refined sympathies, within man impels him, instinctively, to search for his antitype. A person whose sympathies are highly refined may find a society which is incapable of response:

> Hence in solitude, or in that deserted state when we are surrounded by human beings, and yet they sympathise not with us, we love the flowers, the grass, and the waters, and the sky. . . . Sterne says that, if he were in a desert, he would love some cypress. So soon as this want or power is dead, man becomes the living sepulchre of himself, and what yet survives is the mere husk of what once he was. ("On Love," VI, p. 202)

We learn in Prometheus Unbound that love must be "given and returned" if "evil and error" are to fall (II, v, 11. 39-40 and III, iii, 11. 59-62).[25] If man does not find his antitype, other natures which have refined sympathies similar to his, his imaginative response becomes dulled and then is extinguished. "Alastor" records such a failure, but in Epipsychidion, Shelley finds his antitype in Emily Viviani.

Although the order and rhythm of modern European life represent an improvement over the Greek, Shelley does not know what the ultimate

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25 Milton, in Paradise Lost, also says that love must be given and returned. Adam senses a want in the forms of creation surrounding him. Man can only obtain a sense of satisfaction with his antitype, a creature with sympathies refined to a pitch similar to his own:

> Among unequals what society
> Can sort, what harmony, or true delight?
> Which must be mutual, in proportion due
> Given and received; but in disparity,
> The one intense, the other still remiss,
> Cannot well suit with either, but soon prove
> Tedious alike. (Book VIII, 11. 383-389)

perfection of man eventually will be. "On the Manners of the Ancients" states that there is room for further refinement:

> The practices and customs of modern Europe are essentially different from and incomparably less pernicious than either, however remote from what an enlightened mind cannot fail to desire as the future destiny of human beings. (VII, p. 229)

The ultimate point of man's moral progress will be reached when his feelings become awakened to those of all mankind, both in the present and the past. When man can conceive of an infinite number of thoughts in a minute, time stops; he is at the still point of the turning world. Shelley, at least at the time of the composition of Queen Mab, believes that man's sensibility is perfectible:

> If, therefore, the human mind, by any future improvement of its sensibility, should become conscious of an infinite number of ideas in a minute, that minute would be eternity. I do not hence infer that the actual space between the birth and death of a man will ever be prolonged; but that his sensibility is perfectible, and that the number of ideas which his mind is capable of receiving is indefinite. (I, pp. 156-157)[26]

Shelley, in that work, also believed that love freed man from evil:

> Dark flood of time!
> Roll as it listeth thee--I measure not
> By months or moments thy ambiguous course,
> Another may stand by me on the brink
> And watch the bubble whirled beyond his ken
> That pauses at my feet. The sense of love
> The thirst for action, and the impassioned thought
> Prolong my being . . .. (I, p. 157)

Prometheus in Prometheus Unbound represents man who has this highly cultivated imagination. He is

> the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual

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26 Compare: As the poet in "Alastor" has cultivated his imagination to this point, he is isolated; he cannot find his prototype in a world defined by space and time:

> The fountains of divine philosophy
> Fled not his thirsting lips, and all of great,
> Or good, or lovely, which the sacred past
> In truth or fable consecrates, he felt
> And knew. ("Alastor," 11. 71-75)

> nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest end. (Prometheus Unbound, Shelley's Preface, II, p. 172)

His name signifies forethought, as that of his brother, Epimetheus, signifies afterthought. As afterthought, or reason, is a conscious power, its predictions are limited. Forethought, the imagination, has command over all its ideas and is thus more efficient than reason. Prometheus Unbound, an allegory, describes the conflict within man between his reason and his imagination. I would like to discuss the play briefly to summarize some of the ideas contained in my thesis.

The fact that Prometheus has been chained to a rock by Jupiter and tortured for the past 3,000 years is a paradoxical situation because it was Prometheus who gave Jupiter his power: "Then Prometheus/ Gave wisdom, which is strength, to Jupiter,/ . . . And Jove now reigned . . . " (II, iv, 11. 43-49). Prometheus, because of his imaginative capacity, is a poet, the man best suited to see what form of civil habits would best benefit man. Man adopts the forms which the poet creates to govern his life. "[Reasoners] follow the footsteps of poets, and copy the sketches of their creations into the book of common life" (Defence, VII, p. 132). Jupiter is a creation of Prometheus designed to govern the affairs of men.

The only restriction which Prometheus places on Jupiter is, "Let man be free" (II, iv, 1. 45). If Jupiter maintains the metaphorical nature of his office, man will continue to realize that he is only an invention, a conception which is representative of an idea. This leaves man's imaginative capacity free to develop. By the same token, man is also free to rearrange and readjust Jupiter's relationship to fit his changing powers. In the ideal sense, democracy is a form of government

which can be changed to fit the needs of the people. When Jupiter becomes an absolute, man's imagination becomes blunted and his foresight deficient. In the telescoped action of the play, misery befalls man as soon as reason reigns:

> . . . And Jove now reigned; for on the race of man
> First famine, and then toil, and then disease,
> Strife, wounds, and ghastly death unseen before,
> Fell . . .. (II, iv, 11. 49-52)

Prometheus hates and curses Jupiter for chaining him to the rock. He forgets that Jupiter is his own invention and commits the greatest folly of man, to curse that which he has invented. A change in the moral action of the poem occurs when suffering brings wisdom to Prometheus:

> I speak in grief,
> Not exultation, for I hate no more,
> As then ere misery made me wise. (I, 11. 56-58)

Prometheus no longer hates Jupiter, but now pities him. As soon as he pities Jupiter, he is identifying with him, an act which is akin to love. Since hatred is an active determination of the will, Prometheus' consciousness would exercise a tyranny over his unconscious. Through pity, he again becomes capable of an imaginative response. Since Prometheus represents the highest perfection of the imaginative powers, he is now able to perceive Jupiter's imperfect nature. He can see Jupiter as a creation which falls short of the ideal perfection within himself.

When Prometheus regains his imaginative powers he becomes free from space and time. By his intense apprehension of the present and a resultant imaginative response, he is able to determine by feeling that Jupiter is not eternal. Jupiter has become absolute and, thus, is trapped in space and time. This seems to be the secret which Prometheus withholds from Jupiter. Prometheus also realizes that there is no reason to

be in awe of this fabrication.

Throughout his imprisonment, Jupiter sends Furies to torture Prometheus. They show him visions of the confusion among men:

> The good want power, but to weep barren tears.
> The powerful goodness want: worse need for them.
> The wise want love; and those who love want wisdom;
> And all best things are thus confused to ill.
> (I, 11. 625-628)

Prometheus, who has regained his imaginative powers, is able to see the true nature of these actions: "'I close my tearless eyes, but see more clear/ Thy works within my woe-illumed mind,/ Thou subtle tyrant'" (I, 11. 636-638). Because Prometheus has felt the imperfect nature of Jupiter, the visions no longer torture him. He realizes that the evil actions are the fruits of a tree which is not rooted in eternity and they strengthen his conviction that Jupiter's reign is to be short-lived.

> The sights with which thou torturest gird my soul
> With new endurance, till the hour arrives
> When they shall be no types of things which are.
> (I, 11. 643-645)

Jupiter's throne is built on fear and tradition (III, i, 1. 10). In order to secure his power he has begotten a "fatal child" intended to stamp out the last spark in man, a final misery to extinguish man's hope (III, i, 11. 18-24). If man continues to acquiesce in the forms which weaken his spirit, he may eventually lose any chance of regeneration. Man who is in time and space must preserve his spontaneity, or be ever subject to time.

The "fatal child," however, turns out to be Demogorgon, who calls himself, "Eternity" (III, i, 1. 52). Jupiter, who has become an absolute power and fixed in space and time, is unable to endure Eternity. Contained in any absolute is the seed of its eventual destruction. "The future is contained within the present as the plant within the seed"

(Defence, VII, p. 110).

Prometheus is released from the rock and reunited with Asia who represents love. The significance of this union is the fact that the imagination has to be united with love if there is to be moral progress. Man has to fill up his imagination gap. Together love and wisdom can create a new order and the regeneration of man. Love turns the mind in the direction in which the imagination can be operative.

CONCLUSION

Shelley's ambition as a philosopher needs to be appreciated when reading his poetry. The best approach is to read his prose before, or along with, his poetry. Shelley's own intention during his early career was to become a philosopher, and at one point he felt impelled to choose between that and poetry. He wrote several works in an attempt to realize this ambition. Two early essays, "Speculations on Metaphysics" and "Speculations on Morals," were intended as complete philosophical treatises. A Philosophical View of Reform and A Defence of Poetry evidence his continuing interest in this pursuit and amply demonstrate his ability. A Defence of Poetry was to contain three parts, the second to be "an application of these principles [of poetry] to the present state of the cultivation of Poetry, and a defence of the attempt to idealize the modern forms of manners and opinions, and compel them into a subordination to the imaginative and creative faculty" (Defence, VII, p. 140). The fully developed Defence was to show the relation between a system of philosophy, a theory of poetry, and a theory of society.

Shelley seems to respect only a philosophy which is grounded on a stable basis and his works reflect his sceptical approach. Although his system represents a synthesis of many views, he emphasizes the British empiricists, and, especially, Hume. Hume gives a more satisfying explanation of the nature of man and his relation to the universe, a problem which Shelley regards as more psychological than philosophical.

Following Hume, Shelley emphasizes the importance of the imagination. As a kind of associative response, representing an accumulation of all of

man's former experiences, Shelley recognizes its authority over the reason. He considers the imagination as closer to reality, for, when it is activated by some event in nature or society, its creations are in harmony with the course of nature or society. Because of this, Shelley argues that poetry, the "expression of the imagination" (Defence, VII, p. 109), should form the basis for regulating the affairs of men. Man determines the moral character of his ideas by the feeling, whether painful or pleasurable, which accompanies the activity of his imagination. But the reason, lacking this qualifying basis, leads man further and further away from a harmonious existence.

Readers of Shelley's poetry usually criticize his emphasis on abstractions and his didacticism. Shelley, I think, would deny the presence of either. Rather than being abstract, Shelley is defining reality as he feels it. It is we who live in a world of abstractions. Shelley would refute the charge of didacticism which Eliot, for example, finds obtrusive in the poetry by answering that he is only fulfilling his role as a poet. Poets bring down "light and fire from . . . eternal regions" (Defence, VII, p. 135). This truth can only be contained in poetry, the reflection of reality. If we fail to realize that Shelley is not speaking in mere abstractions and not being didactic, we miss the truth that lies in the poetry. What Eliot terms philosophic theory is the truth that Shelley is communicating. By labelling Shelley as abstract or didactic, we are assuming that our view of life defines reality. Shelley realizes that society can be freed from error and evil only by poetry which is not an abstraction.

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VITA AUCTORIS

1939 - Born, Chesley, Ontario.

1966 - Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Windsor.

1968 - Master of Arts Degree from the University of Windsor.